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ABSTRACT

The document serves two purposes: to describe the planning process, staffing, materials, organization, and results of the Austin (Texas) Learning Center-Library Pilot Project; and to provide guidance to those who wish to develop similar programs and adult learning centers in their communities. The report describes the Austin experience, together with recommendations that can be generalized to other communities interested in establishing a library-learning center, under the following headings: goals, locating the facility, personnel needs (detailing the functions and responsibilities of both the library and teaching staffs), staffing and scheduling, the instructional program, equipment needs, recruitment and publicity, an advisory committee, and cost estimates for establishing a library-learning center. Experience with the Austin project has shown that the library can serve as a viable instrument in furthering the education of adults. Forms used at the Austin Adult Learning Center are appended, with comments on their use. (Author/NH)

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ESTABLISHING ADULT LEARNING CENTERS IN COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

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FOREWORD

This document was written to serve two purposes: to describe the planning process, staffing, materials, organization, and results of the Austin Learning Center-Library Pilot Project, and to provide guidance to those who wish to develop similar programs in their communities. Details of our experiences with the Austin project are given and followed by recommendations that can be generalized to other communities.

The Texas State Library, the Austin Public Library, the Texas Education Agency, and the Industrial and Business Training Bureau of the Division of Extension, The University of Texas at Austin, combined efforts to produce this report.

[redacted]

Although libraries since their beginning have been concerned with the education of adults and more specifically with the reading skills of adults, their active participation in programs of adult education is recent and still not widespread. However, previous nonparticipation in adult education has not been due to a lack of suitability of the library to this type of program. To the contrary, a neighborhood library offers several unique advantages as a location for an adult learning center:

1. Generally speaking, the casual informal atmosphere of a branch library is as the open door more accessible and less threatening for adult students than other institutional settings with a high school appearance.
2. Because the library is an unthreatening resource center, use of its facilities and materials is also to the advantage of programs for adults, available to students and teachers.
3. As the library [redacted] students are much aware of library services and are encouraged to undertake their own self-education.
4. Finally, a practical consideration, a neighborhood library is usually within walking distance of prospective students. This is especially good to prevent group efforts transportation from [redacted] problems.

The following is a guide to establishing a library learning center based on the experiences of the Seattle Literacy Project. However, because the Seattle program was developed as a satellite to the Seattle Adult Learning Center, this guide is not detailed in methods of organizing and administering a learning center from its inception. Further information on this subject may be found in How to Establish an Adult Learning Center.[1]

[1] The University of Texas at Austin, Division of Extension, How to Establish an Adult Learning Center (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas, 1971).

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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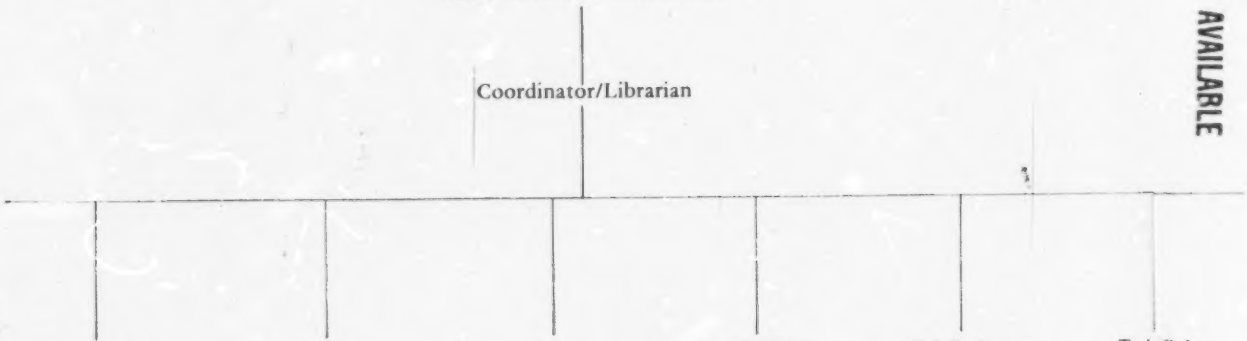
Austin Learning Center—Library Program Organization



Note: This is a partial organization chart and does not show all the programs for which the director and coordinator are responsible.

and materials. Individualized instruction is widely considered the best approach to use with adults. Students may work at their own level and their own speed without any fear of competition. Furthermore, the instruction may be varied to meet the needs of particular students without affecting the others. A semiprogrammed instructional series enables students to work on their own and usually to check their own work. Teachers and aides are always available when a student needs help. The one exception to use of the individualized approach involves students learning English. When possible, it has been found that the mini-group approach combined with individual work has the best results with this group.

The Austin Library Project divides students into four groups: levels A, B, C, and students learning English as a second language. Materials are selected in terms of what will best meet the needs of the students at each level. The fact that the approach is individualized means that a student may being at the appropriate point within a level rather than at the beginning. A student coming to a library-learning center for the first time is greeted by one of the staff members and engaged in conversation. To as great an extent as possible, information is gathered regarding the student's background, probable level, goals for himself, and so forth. The student's level when he enters the program is more precisely determined by his ability to fill out an information sheet (see appendix, page 23), rather than by his performance on a test.

Level A students (grades 1-3) work primarily with the *Mott Basic Language Skills Program,*[2] which at its most fundamental level, teaches the student to read a page from left to right and from top to bottom. The series progresses through sight and sound recognition of the alphabet, writing, comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammar. A word attack skills book can be used to determine a student's level and where in the series he needs to begin. The program is semiprogrammed in approach, providing the student with

[2] Allied Educational Council, *Mott Basic Language Skills Program* (Galien, Michigan).

immediate feedback and reinforcement. At the lower levels the Language Master is used as an aid to learning the alphabet and vocabulary. The *Noonan-Spradley Series*[3] is used at this level to teach recognition and understanding of numbers and basic computational skills ranging from addition to percent. The program includes tests and answer sheets. Both the Mott and the Noonan-Spradley material are designed for adults. They introduce simple skills without depending on cartoons or childish examples for illustration.

At the B level (grades 4-5) students continue developing their vocabulary and mathematical skills. Punctuation, parts of speech, and other grammatical constructions are studied, and reading comprehension becomes a point of emphasis. The workbooks at this level are also from the Mott Series and the Noonan-Spradley program. Extra help in math, which is the most difficult subject for most students, is provided by the publication, *Basic Essentials of Mathematics, Parts 1 & 2*.[4] Filmstrips and cassettes are used as an added means of illustrating grammar and math rules and for comprehension of ideas in special subject areas, such as science and social studies. (Filmstrips and cassettes used are listed in the previously mentioned bibliography developed through this program.) As a practical exercise, students are sometimes given activities with sections or articles from the newspaper to read or interpret.

The goal of the student at the C level (grades 6-8) is usually the successful completion of the General Education Development Test. At this stage, the student is reading extensively at advanced levels in different subject areas. A great deal of the work at the C level involves reading comprehension in science, social studies, and literature. Advanced math and grammar continue. Two series that have been found particularly helpful in meeting the needs of the C

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[3] Allied Educational Council, *Noonan-Spradley Diagnostic Program of Computational Skills* (Galien, Michigan).

[4] James T. Shea, *Basic Essentials of Mathematics, Parts 1 & 2* (Austin, Texas: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1965).

level students are the *Cambridge Pre-GED Program*[6] and the *Cowles GED Program*.[7]

Students learning English who are already literate in Spanish are placed in one of the five levels of the *Lado English Series*,[8] depending on their knowledge of English. The material provides both oral and written practice and includes explanations of progressively more difficult grammatical constructions. For language students who are not literate, instruction is begun with the basic level of the Mott material. Language records, the Language Master, and language cassettes are all used to advantage with ESL students.

In addition to the instructional material, a collection of library materials was purchased by the Austin Library Project, especially for adult education students. Some of the books are supplementary to the instructional program while others are of general interest or for pleasure reading. (Most of this material is listed and annotated in the previously mentioned bibliography.) It is advantageous to students to participate in some extra reading as it increases their vocabulary and comprehension skills, which compose a major portion of the high school equivalency exam.

EQUIPMENT

Although the individualized instructional approach is based primarily on the use of books and workbooks, some equipment may be helpful. Any piece of equipment is, of

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[6] Angelica W. Cass, *Cambridge Pre-GED Program* (New York: Cambridge Book Co., 1972).

[7] *Cowles GED Program*, Cowles Book Company, 1970. *Correctness and Effectiveness of Expression, General Mathematical Ability, Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Social Studies, Interpretation of Reading Materials in the Natural Sciences, Interpretation of Literary Materials.*

[8] Robert Lado, *Lado English Series*, Books 1-5 (Regents Publishing Company, 1970).

course, useful only to the extent that there are students with problems that will be helped by use of the equipment. Equipment used successfully by the Austin Library Project includes the following:

1. The Language Master Audio-Visual Instructional System, which allows student participation in prerecorded lesson materials. The student listens to the instructor on one track and then records on the other. This program is most helpful in teaching the English language, vocabulary, and the alphabet.
2. Individual filmstrip viewers and cassette player/recorders, which can be used with students at higher levels for reading and comprehension. More advanced language students can use the cassettes for recording longer passages than allowed by the Language Master.
3. A slide projector or movie projector may be useful with small groups that are studying the same thing.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

An organized and continuous plan for recruitment and publicity is necessary on behalf of the library-learning center. Most of the people the program will be trying to contact will not be library users, so an outreach effort is needed. It is important that these activities be continuous because the transient nature of much of the population causes a constant influx of new people. Furthermore, experience has indicated that most people will not pay much attention to what they hear about the program until they are in a position to seriously consider it. The primary purpose of the recruitment program should be to acquire a paraprofessional who can visit door-to-door, explaining the program. Other staff should also participate in this visitation as time permits. House-to-house visiting will provide an opportunity to survey the potential client's needs and wants in terms of the library and the education program.

The following supplemental methods of publicity should be used simultaneously and regularly:

1. Flyers should be frequently distributed in the appropriate neighborhoods.
2. Posters should be placed at strategic locations around all learning centers.
3. Radio, television, and newspaper coverage should be arranged and utilized as often as possible.
4. Churches and social agencies—such as day care, community schools, neighborhood centers, welfare agencies, and so forth—should be informed of the availability of the program.

As the program expands, students will contact other potential students.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An advisory committee can be established at any of several points during the planning and implementation of this library-learning center, but it will probably be of most use after the center has actually begun operation. At this stage of development, the committee members will have more to react to. The main ways in which the advisory committee can be of service are—

1. to act as a liaison between the education program and the people of the community;
2. to recommend services and activities needed in the communities and to suggest how they might be accomplished; and
3. to suggest ways to reach people in the community.

Persons to serve on the advisory committee might include—

1. education personnel,
2. library personnel,
3. community residents,

[illegible] presentations from relevant businesses and public service agencies; and

[illegible]

5. [illegible] students.

[illegible]

The following cost estimate is based on the experience of the Austin Library Project and will vary depending on resources available or standard salaries in a given community. In Austin, the public library provided space free of charge and also staffed the library during hours of program operation.

Staff

Librarian - full-time	$ 7,500/12 month year
Instructor - full-time	$ 7,500/12 month year
2 Instructors - part-time	$ 5,040/12 month year
Paraprofessional - full-time	$ 6,000/12 month year
[illegible]	[illegible]

Materials

Instructional (ESL and ABE)	$ 2,000
Library related	$ 1,000
[illegible]	[illegible]

(Library materials for students may be found in the general collection if there are insufficient funds available to purchase a special collection.)

Equipment

2 Language Masters @ $250.00 each	$500.00
1 slide filmstrip projector	$ 22.50
2 individual filmstrip viewers @ $35.95 each	$ 71.90
2 cassette players/recorders @ $29.95 each	$ 59.90
[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

student sweeps right on into the C-level questions and answers them correctly without misspellings, bad punctuation or grammar, and has understandable responses that are pertinent to the questions, then the student should be placed in GED preparatory material and readied for the GED tests or proceed with the GED tests.

The placement instrument accomplishes at least three purposes simultaneously: it offers a gross placement for the incoming student, it accumulates necessary information for the student's information file, it puts the student at ease in the sense that the student feels that he is still in the preliminary stages of his enrollment and is not yet under stress. Also, the instrument gives the instructor a good beginning for judging the student's usable vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and reading ability. All of this information is valuable in setting up a program of individualized instruction for the student.

INFORMATION SHEET

A

1. Write or print your name _____

2. What is your address? _____

3. What is the date today? _____

4. Do you have a telephone? _____
   What is the number? _____

5. Are you married? _____ What is your husband's name (or wife's name)? _____

6. When is your birthday? _____

7. When were you born? _____

B

1. Are you a citizen of the United States? _____

2. Are you a citizen by birth or by naturalization? _____

3. Do you maintain private transportation? _____

4. If so, what type? _____

5. Do you possess a valid driver's license? _____

6. What is your ethnic origin? _____

7. Are you a registered voter in the state of Texas? _____

8. If you are presently employed, please indicate whether you are employed on a full-time or a part-time basis.

_____

9. How long have you worked for your present employer on the job that you now hold? _____

10. Do you subscribe to an Austin newspaper? _____

11. Do you subscribe to other newspapers or magazines? ____

12. If so, please list them. _____

13. Do you own (or have ready access to) a television set? ____

14. Do you own a radio, or is one available to you? _____

15. Please answer the following questions with either *fine, good, fair, poor,* or *bad.*

    a. How is your vision? _____

    b. How is your hearing? _____

    c. How is your general health? _____

16. Please write in words the number of times you estimate that you visit the doctor each year: _____

17. How did you learn about this program? _____

C

: Please write a brief and pertinent paragraph explaining how you were made aware of this program:

_____

2. Please writite a paragraph telling the aspirations that you have that you feel can be enhanced or furthered by the program that you are now beginning.

3. Please writite a paragraph about yourself as you see yourself. You may reiterate the information that you have already given in the above paragraph.

4. Give me the information that you feel will be most helpful in aiding an instructor who is trying to prepare a program of instruction suited to your particular needs.